

ACRO DANCE AUSTRALIA

Empowerment and participation of children

Children have the right to give their views and opinions about decisions that affect them and to be listened to.

Empowerment is about helping children to have their say. Acting to empower children should always guide the work of your organisation.

Participation is important for children because it gives them an opportunity to have a say about issues and decisions that affect them. Children are more likely to speak up about their concerns about feeling unsafe, or make a complaint, if they feel their views are valued and welcomed.



Empowerment and participation is not a one off event – it is an approach that needs to be a part of our organisational culture.

Empowering children and facilitating their participation enhances their safety. In Victoria, mandatory child safe standards have been introduced to help protect children from abuse in organisations. Standard seven requires organisations to take steps to promote the participation and empowerment of children.

Benefits of empowering and supporting the participation of children

Participation and empowerment are vital components of a child safe organisation that benefits children, families, organisations and staff.

- Involving and consulting with children enables us to improve our policies, practices and services as children provide a unique voice regarding what makes them feel safe and unsafe.
- Facilitating the empowerment and participation of children enhances a culture of child safety and listening to children within our organisation.
- Children and young people learn new skills, build self-esteem and develop an understanding of collaboration and rights.
- Children are more likely to report abuse or concerns if they feel safe and empowered by us.
- Children feel their views are valued and listened to. Children are more likely to support the outcome if they have been involved.

It is critical that we are genuine in our approach to children and follow through on what you say and what you will do – credibility needs to be earned and can be easily lost.